LEGEND
DARK HORSE COMICS
DANGER UNLIMITED 3
$2.00 US
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DANGER
g·cody/94
TRAGEDY DOGS THE
TORCH of LIBERTY

STORY AND ART BY JOHN BYRNE
COLORS BY MATT WEBB
PAINTED COVER ART BY GARY CODY

Dedicated to the memory of
JACK KIRBY
1917 - 1994

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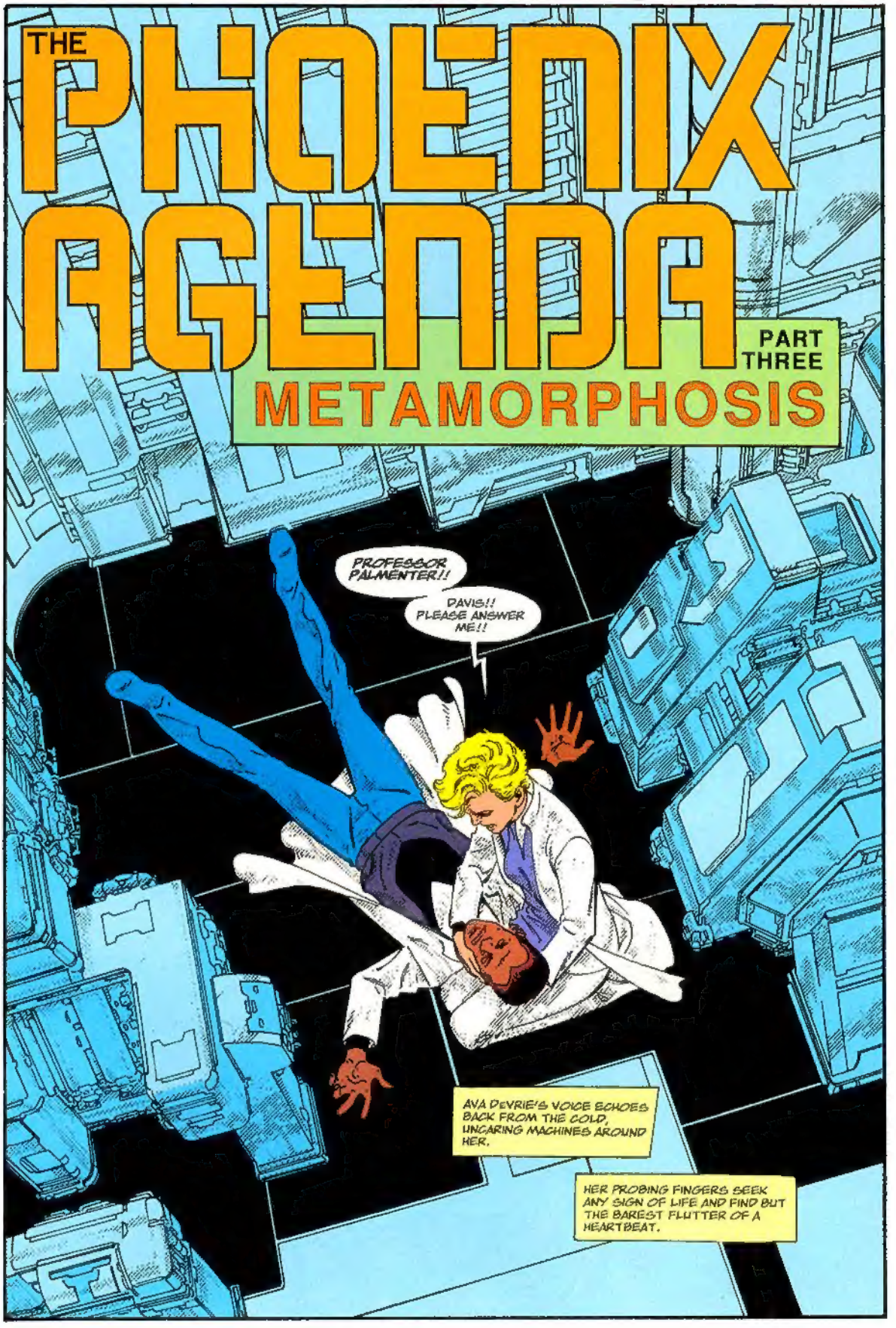
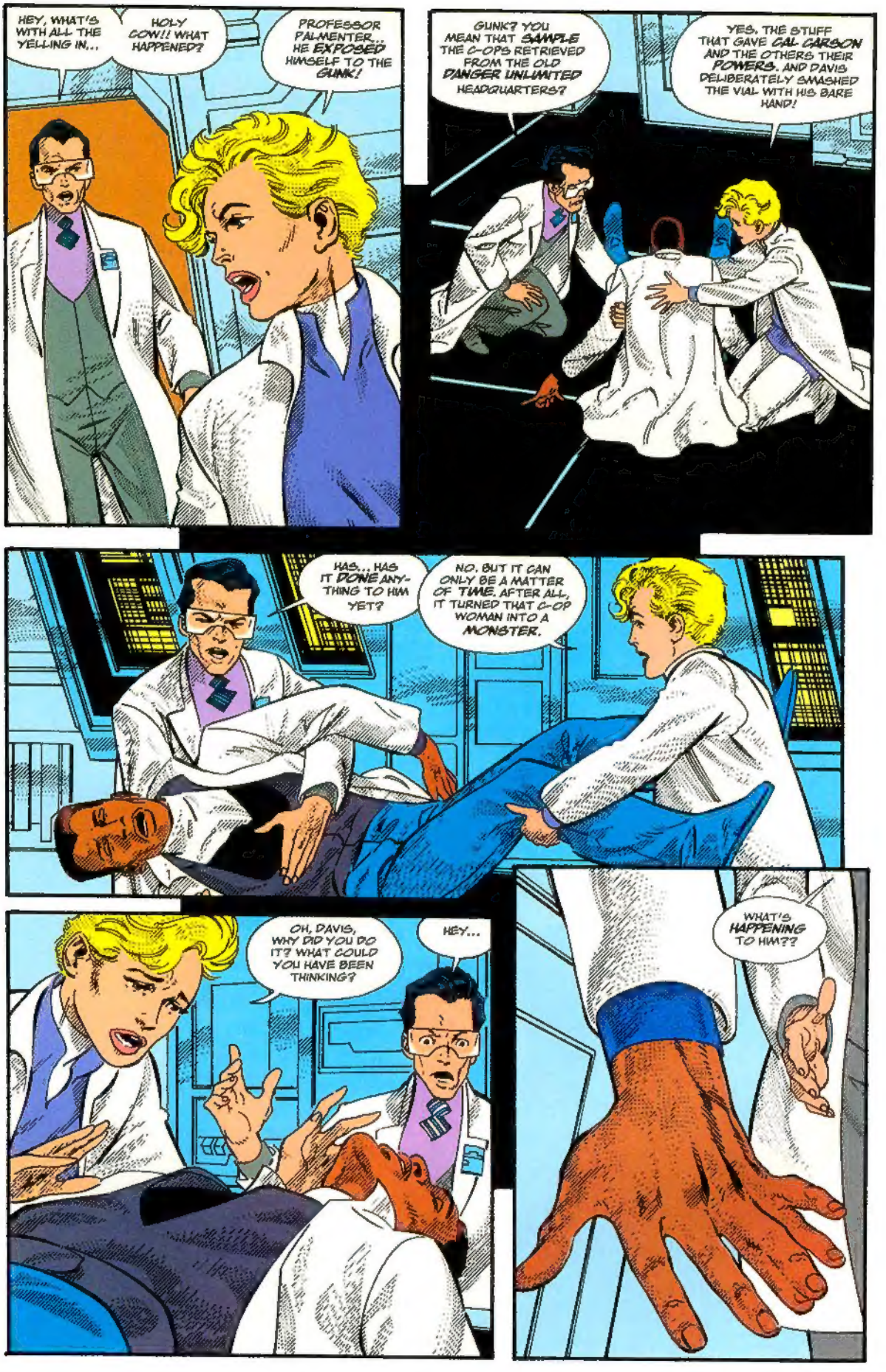
JOHN BYRNE Presents DANGER UNLIMITED™

THE PHOENIX AGENDA

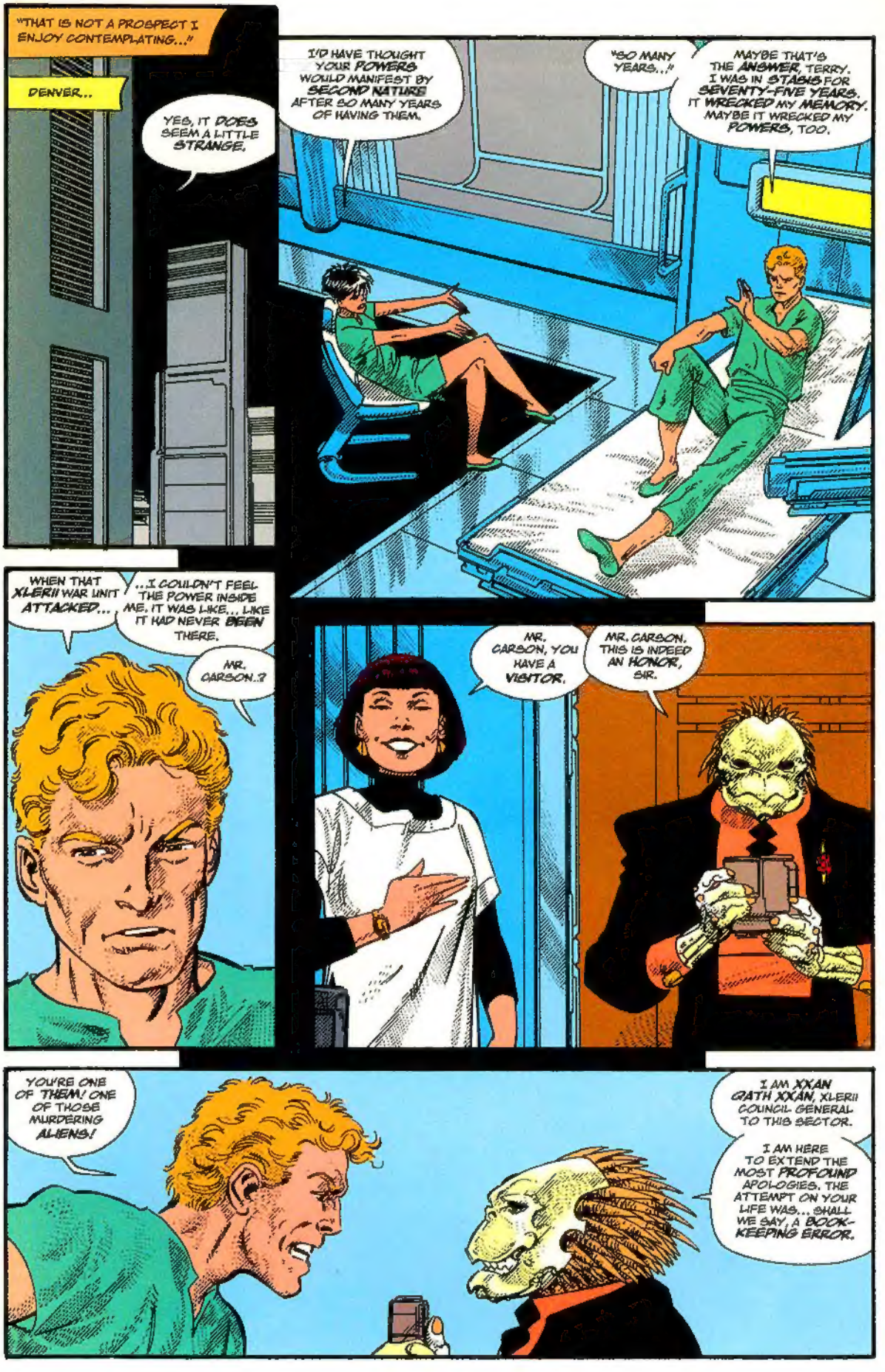
PART THREE

METAMORPHOSIS

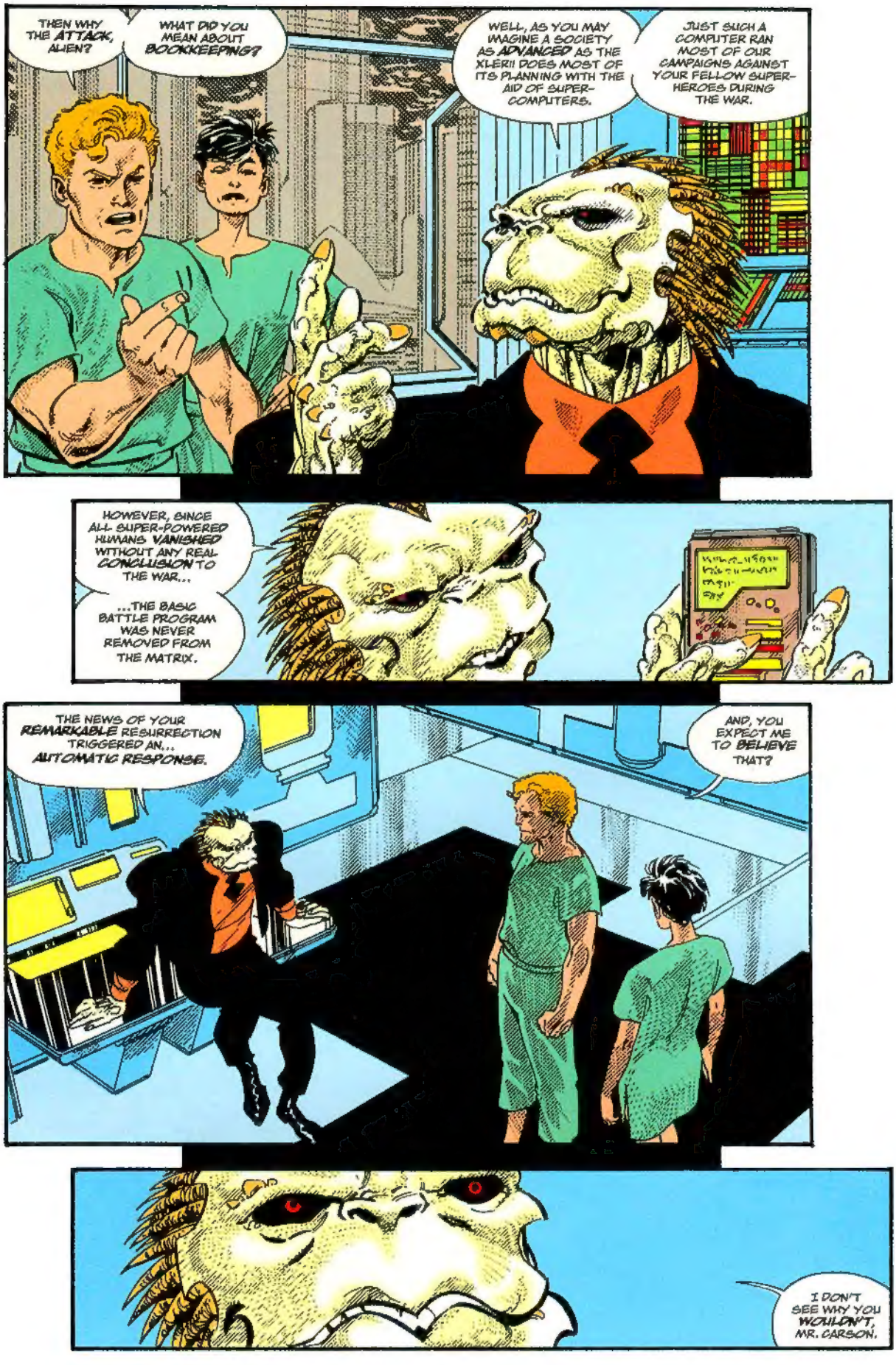

PROFESSOR PALMENTER!!
DAVIS!! PLEASE ANSWER ME!!
AVA DEVRIE'S VOICE ECHOES BACK FROM THE COLD, UNCARING MACHINES AROUND HER.
HER PROBING FINGERS SEEK ANY SIGN OF LIFE AND FIND BUT THE BAREST FLUTTER OF A HEARTBEAT.

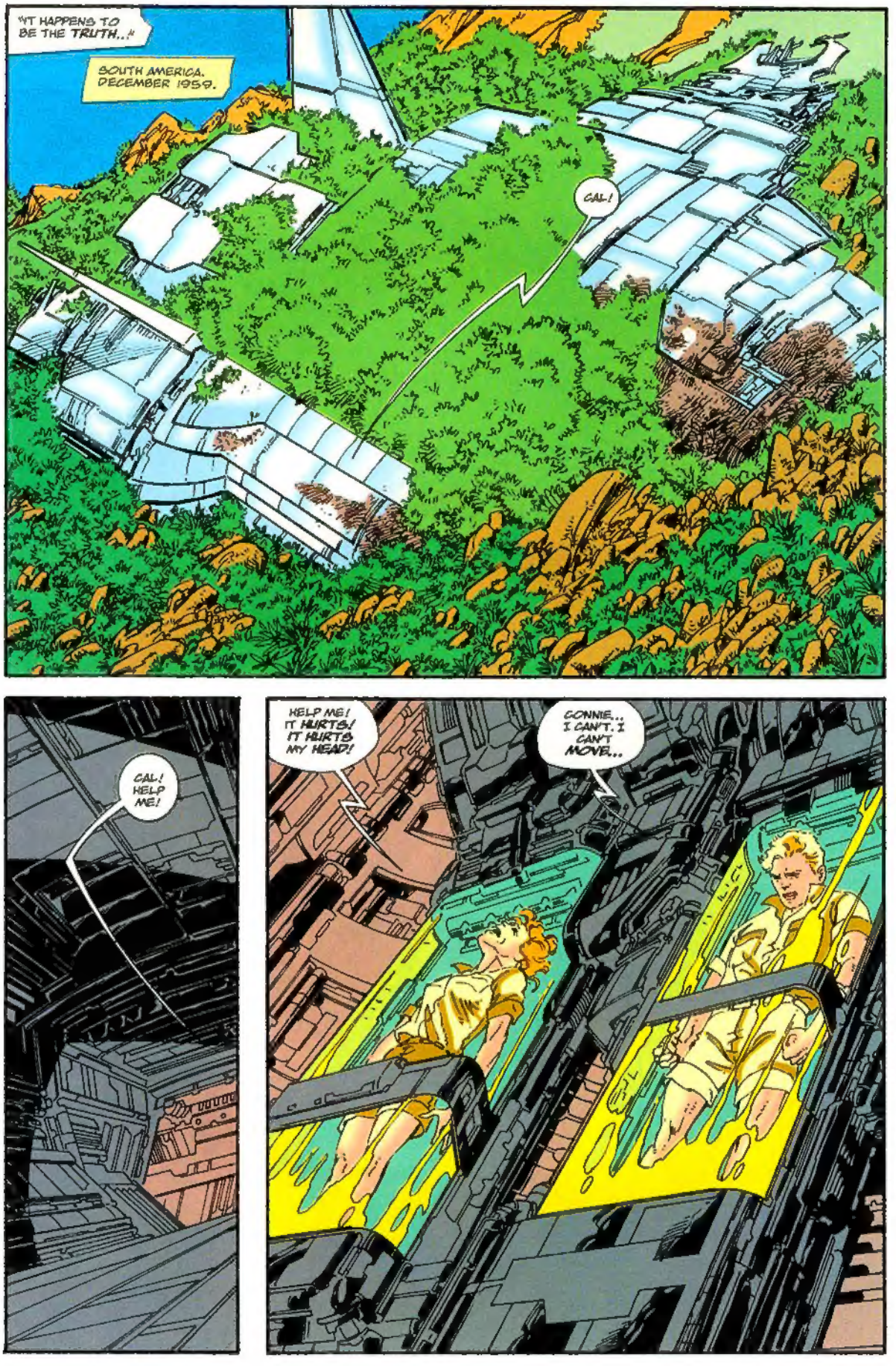

HEY, WHAT'S WITH ALL THE YELLING IN...
HOLY COW!! WHAT HAPPENED?
PROFESSOR PALMENTER... HE EXPOSED HIMSELF TO THE GUNK!
GUNK? YOU MEAN THAT SAMPLE THE C-OPS RETRIEVED FROM THE OLD DANGER UNLIMITED HEADQUARTERS?
YES. THE STUFF THAT GAVE CAL CARSON AND THE OTHERS THEIR POWERS. AND DAVIS DELIBERATELY SMASHED THE VIAL WITH HIS BARE HAND!
HAS... HAS IT DONE ANY-THING TO HIM YET?
NO. BUT IT CAN ONLY BE A MATTER OF TIME. AFTER ALL, IT TURNED THAT C-OP WOMAN INTO A MONSTER.
OH, DAVIS, WHY DID YOU DO IT? WHAT COULD YOU HAVE BEEN THINKING?
HEY...
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HIM??

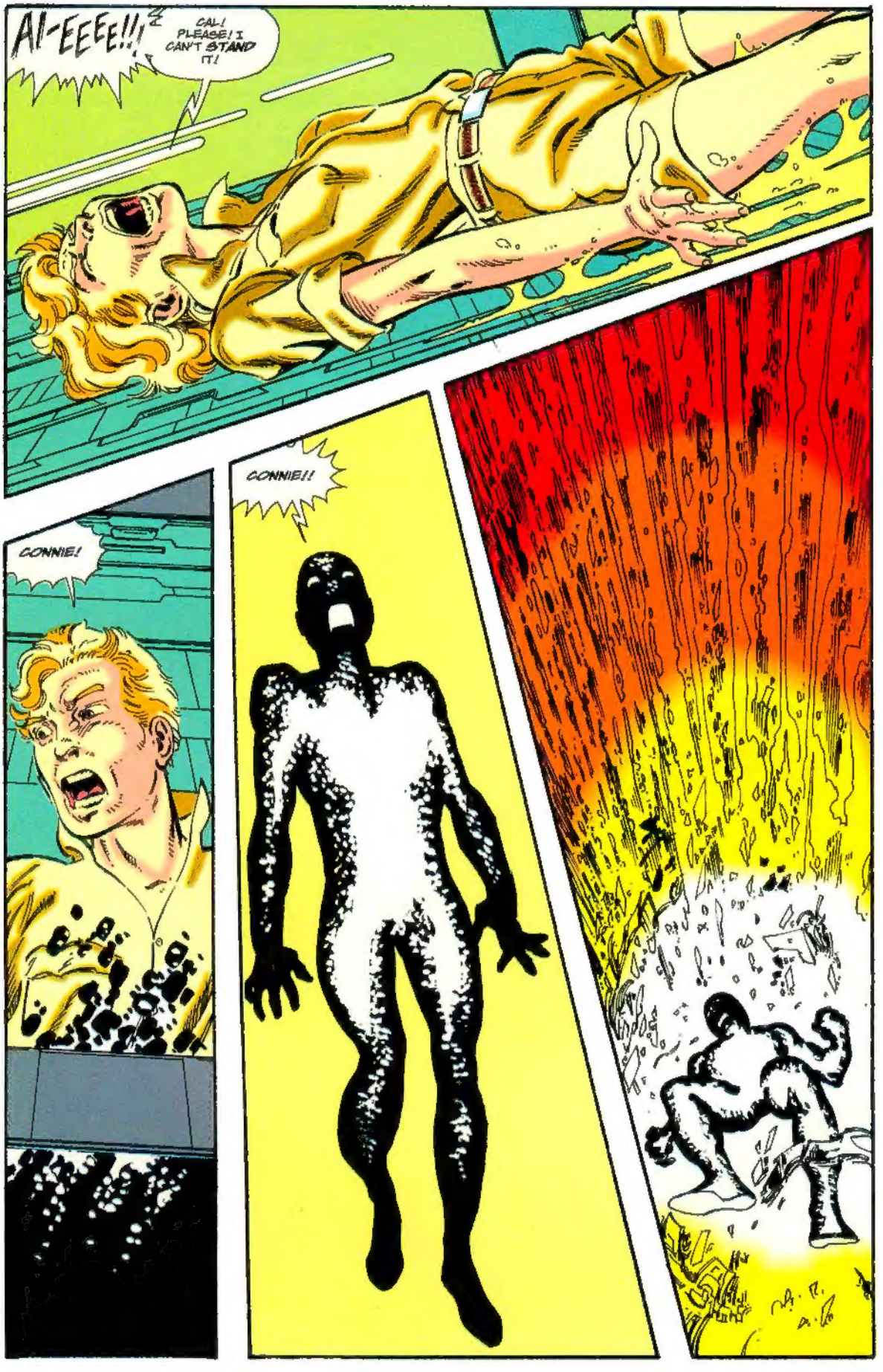
CHICAGO, PRESENT CAPITAL OF THE NORTH AMERICAN ZONE.
I AM NOT PLEASED, ESTEBAN.
SIR... I ACTED AS QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY AS POSSIBLE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
DID YOU?
AN OPEN ATTACK IN THE MIDDLE OF A CROWDED HOSPITAL. BY ONE OF MY ENFORCERS IN FULL COMBAT GEAR?
TELL ME, ESTEBAN, IS THIS IN SOME WAY YOUR NOTION OF SUBTLETY?
YOU SAID YOU WANTED CAL CARSON ELIMINATED.
I DIDN'T REALIZE SUBTLETY WAS AN OPTION, SIR.
SUBTLETY IS ALWAYS AN OPTION, ESTEBAN. THE WHOLE XLERII CONQUEST OF THE EARTH WAS ULTIMATELY ACHIEVED THROUGH SUBTLETY.
YOUR BUNGLING HAS NOW CREATED A SITUATION WHICH WILL REQUIRE ME TO REPORT AN UNNECESSARY FAILURE TO MY SUPERIORS.

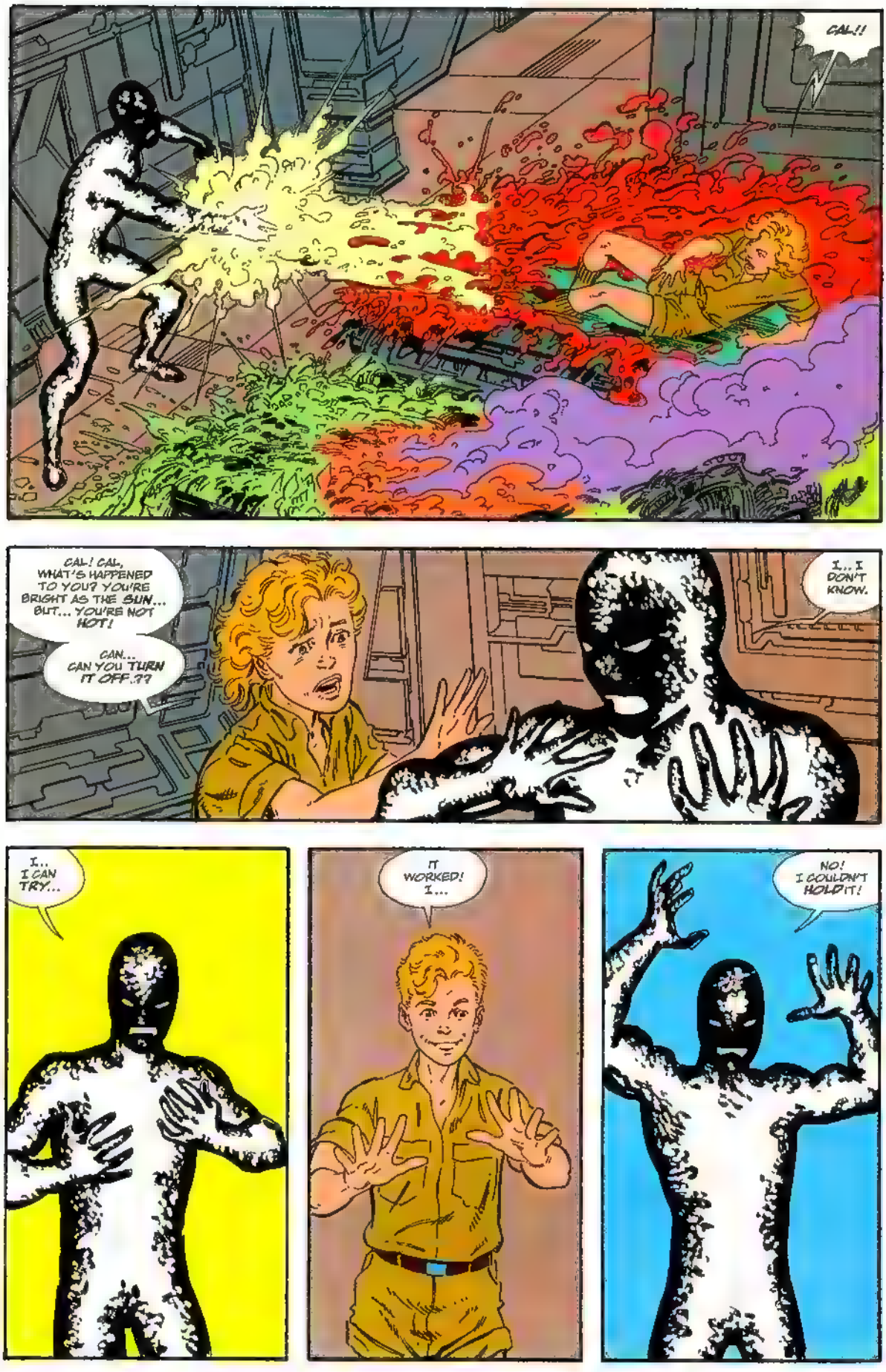

"THAT IS NOT A PROSPECT I ENJOY CONTEMPLATING..."
DENVER...
YES, IT DOES SEEM A LITTLE STRANGE.
I'D HAVE THOUGHT YOUR POWERS WOULD MANIFEST BY SECOND NATURE AFTER SO MANY YEARS OF HAVING THEM.
"SO MANY YEARS..."
MAYBE THAT'S THE ANSWER, TERRY. I WAS IN STASIS FOR SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS. IT WRECKED MY MEMORY. MAYBE IT WRECKED MY POWERS, TOO.
WHEN THAT XLERII WAR UNIT ATTACKED...
...I COULDN'T FEEL THE POWER INSIDE ME. IT WAS LIKE... LIKE IT HAD NEVER BEEN THERE.
MR. CARSON..?
MR. CARSON, YOU HAVE A VISITOR.
MR. CARSON, THIS IS INDEED AN HONOR, SIR.
YOU'RE ONE OF THEM! ONE OF THOSE MURDERING ALIENS!
I AM XXAN GATH XXAN, XLERII COUNCIL GENERAL TO THIS SECTOR.
I AM HERE TO EXTEND THE MOST PROFOUND APOLOGIES. THE ATTEMPT ON YOUR LIFE WAS... SHALL WE SAY, A BOOK-KEEPING ERROR.

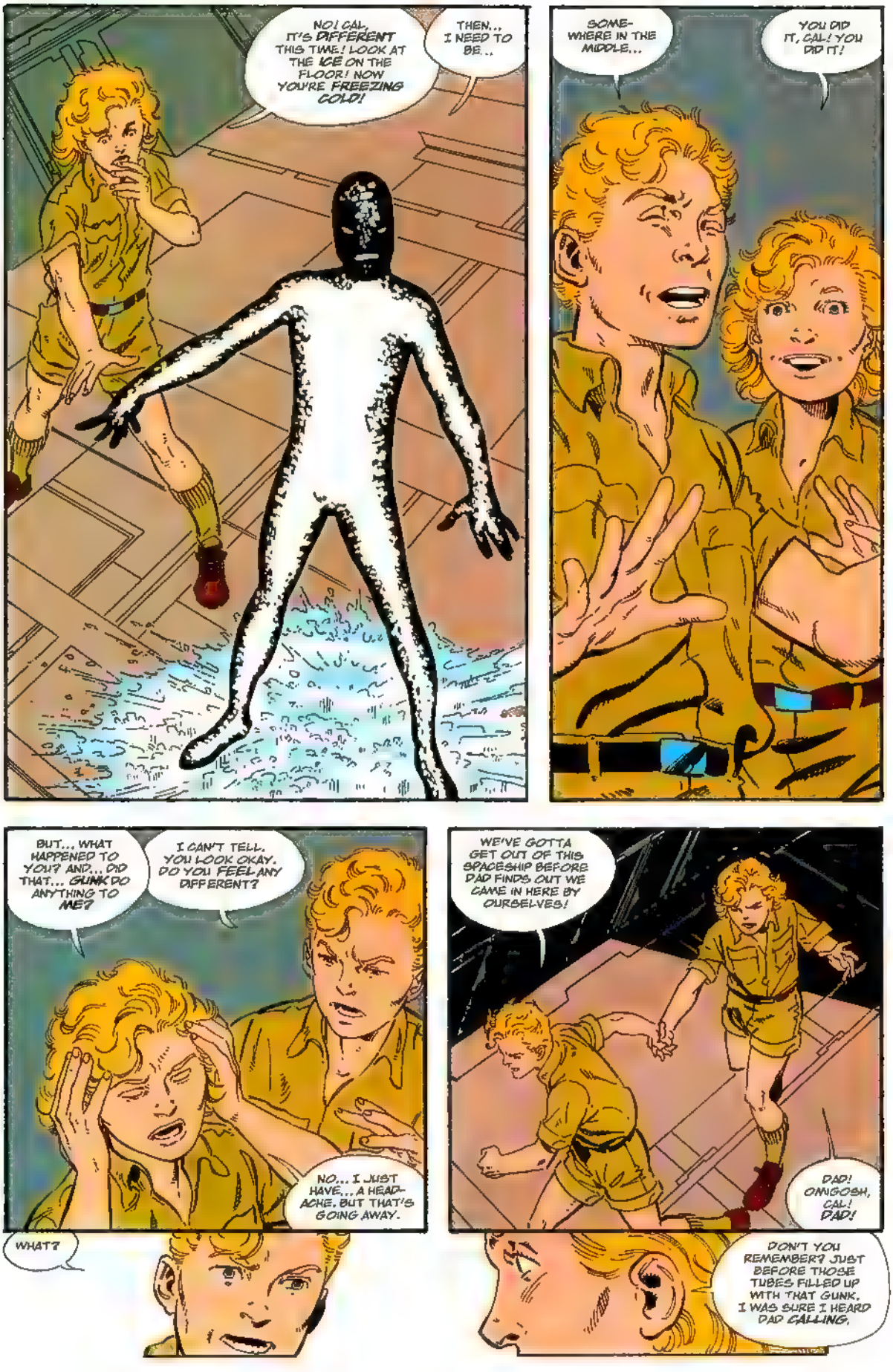
BOOK-KEEPING ..??
QUITE SO. AS I AM SURE YOU HAVE BEEN INFORMED, THERE WAS A TIME, AND NOT SO LONG AGO, THAT YOUR PEOPLE AND MINE WERE AT WAR. THAT CONFLICT HAS BEEN SETTLED AMICABLY, BUT WHILE IT WAS BEING CONDUCTED...
...'SUPERHEROES' SUCH AS YOURSELF WERE... SHALL WE SAY, A CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY.
THEY FOUGHT YOU, YOU MEAN. FOUGHT YOU WITH EVERY FORCE AT THEIR COMMAND...
...UNTIL YOU DESTROYED THEM ALL.
TSK TSK! IS THIS THE KIND OF NONSENSE YOU'VE BEEN TELLING MR. CARSON, C-OP LAFAYETTE?
IT IS TRUE ALL OF THE SUPER-POWERED HUMANS VANISHED FROM EARTH IN YOUR YEAR 2011...
...BUT I ASSURE YOU, WE XLERII HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.
BY THEN WE WERE WELL INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS BY WHICH WE EXECUTED THE PEACEFUL SURRENDER OF YOUR WORLD.
YOU BOUGHT US OUT, YOU MEAN.
THAT IS THE HUMAN PHRASE, YES.
THE "HAVE NOTS" ALWAYS OUTNUMBERED THE "HAVES." WE OFFERED THEM A SURCEASE OF THEIR SUFFERINGS. THEY ACCEPTED.
SO NOW WE RULE YOUR WORLD, AND HUMANS AND XLERII LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE.


THEN WHY THE ATTACK, ALIEN?
WHAT DID YOU MEAN ABOUT BOOKKEEPING?
WELL, AS YOU MAY IMAGINE A SOCIETY AS ADVANCED AS THE XLER!! DOES MOST OF ITS PLANNING WITH THE AID OF SUPER-COMPUTERS.
JUST SUCH A COMPUTER RAN MOST OF OUR CAMPAIGNS AGAINST YOUR FELLOW SUPER-HEROES DURING THE WAR.
HOWEVER, SINCE ALL SUPER-POWERED HUMANS VANISHED WITHOUT ANY REAL CONCLUSION TO THE WAR...
...THE BASIC BATTLE PROGRAM WAS NEVER REMOVED FROM THE MATRIX.
THE NEWS OF YOUR REMARKABLE RESURRECTION TRIGGERED AN... AUTOMATIC RESPONSE.
AND, YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT?
I DON'T SEE WHY YOU WOULDN'T, MR. CARSON.

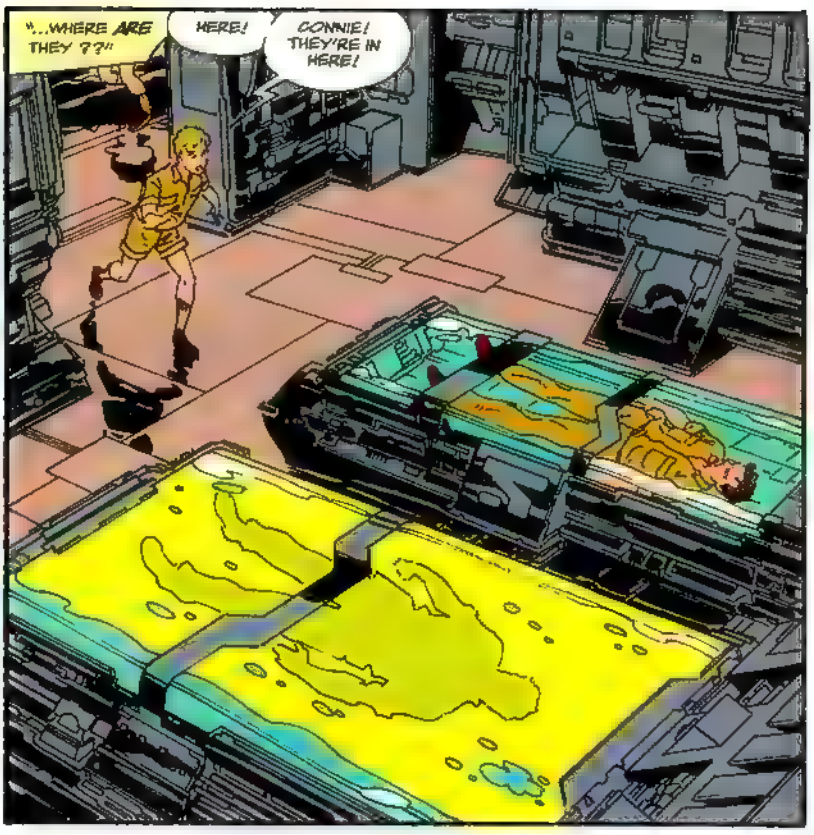

"IT HAPPENS TO BE THE TRUTH..."
SOUTH AMERICA. DECEMBER 1959.
CAL!
CAL! HELP ME!
HELP ME! IT HURTS! IT HURTS MY HEAD!
CONNIE... I CAN'T. I CAN'T MOVE...

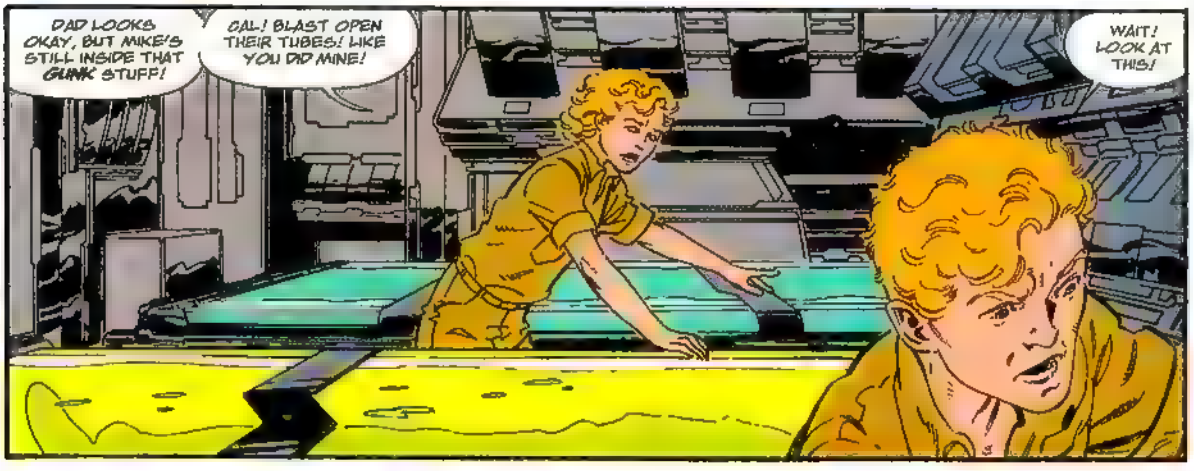

AI-EEEE!!!
CAL! PLEASE! I CAN'T STAND IT!
CONNIE!
CONNIE!!

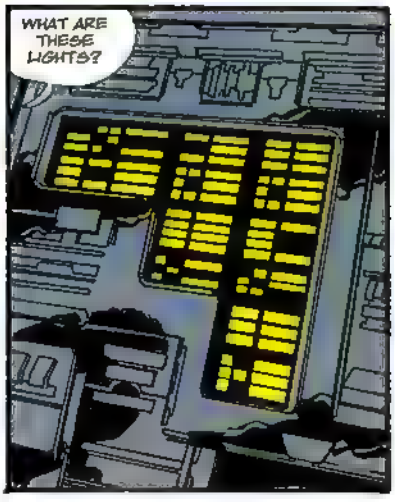

CAL!!
CAL! CAL, WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU? YOU'RE BRIGHT AS THE SUN... BUT... YOU'RE NOT HOT!
CAN... CAN YOU TURN IT OFF..??
I... I DON'T KNOW.
I... I CAN TRY...
IT WORKED! I...
NO! I COULDN'T HOLD IT!

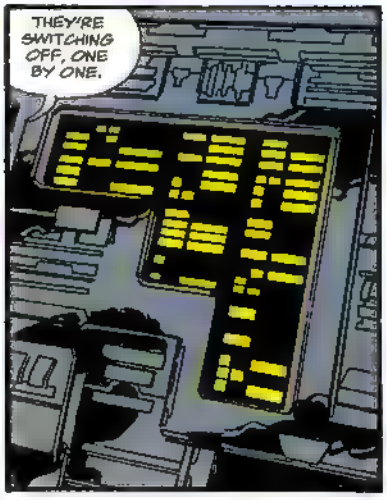

NO! CAL, IT'S DIFFERENT THIS TIME! LOOK AT THE ICE ON THE FLOOR! NOW YOU'RE FREEZING COLD!
THEN... I NEED TO BE...
SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE...
YOU DID IT, CAL! YOU DID IT!
BUT... WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? AND... DID THAT... GUNK DO ANYTHING TO ME?
I CAN'T TELL. YOU LOOK OKAY. DO YOU FEEL ANY DIFFERENT?
NO... I JUST HAVE... A HEADACHE. BUT THAT'S GOING AWAY.
WHAT?
WE'VE GOTTA GET OUT OF THIS SPACESHIP BEFORE DAD FINDS OUT WE CAME IN HERE BY OURSELVES!
DAD! OMGOSH, CAL! DAD!
DON'T YOU REMEMBER? JUST BEFORE THOSE TUBES FILLED UP WITH THAT GUNK, I WAS SURE I HEARD DAD CALLING.

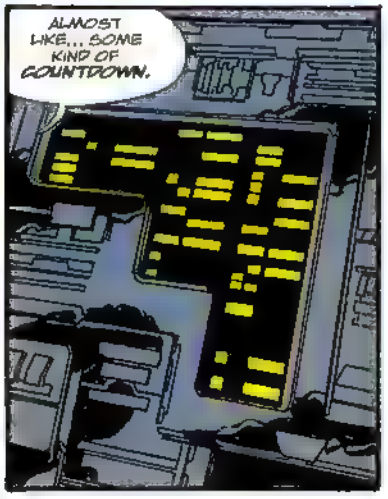
HOLY COW! YOU'RE RIGHT! AND MIKE WORLEY, TOO!
THEY MUST HAVE ALREADY COME IN LOOKING FOR US! OH, MAN, ARE WE GONNA GET IT!
BUT... CAL... IF DAD AND MIKE CAME IN LOOKING FOR US...


"...WHERE ARE THEY ??"
HERE!
CONNIE! THEY'RE IN HERE!

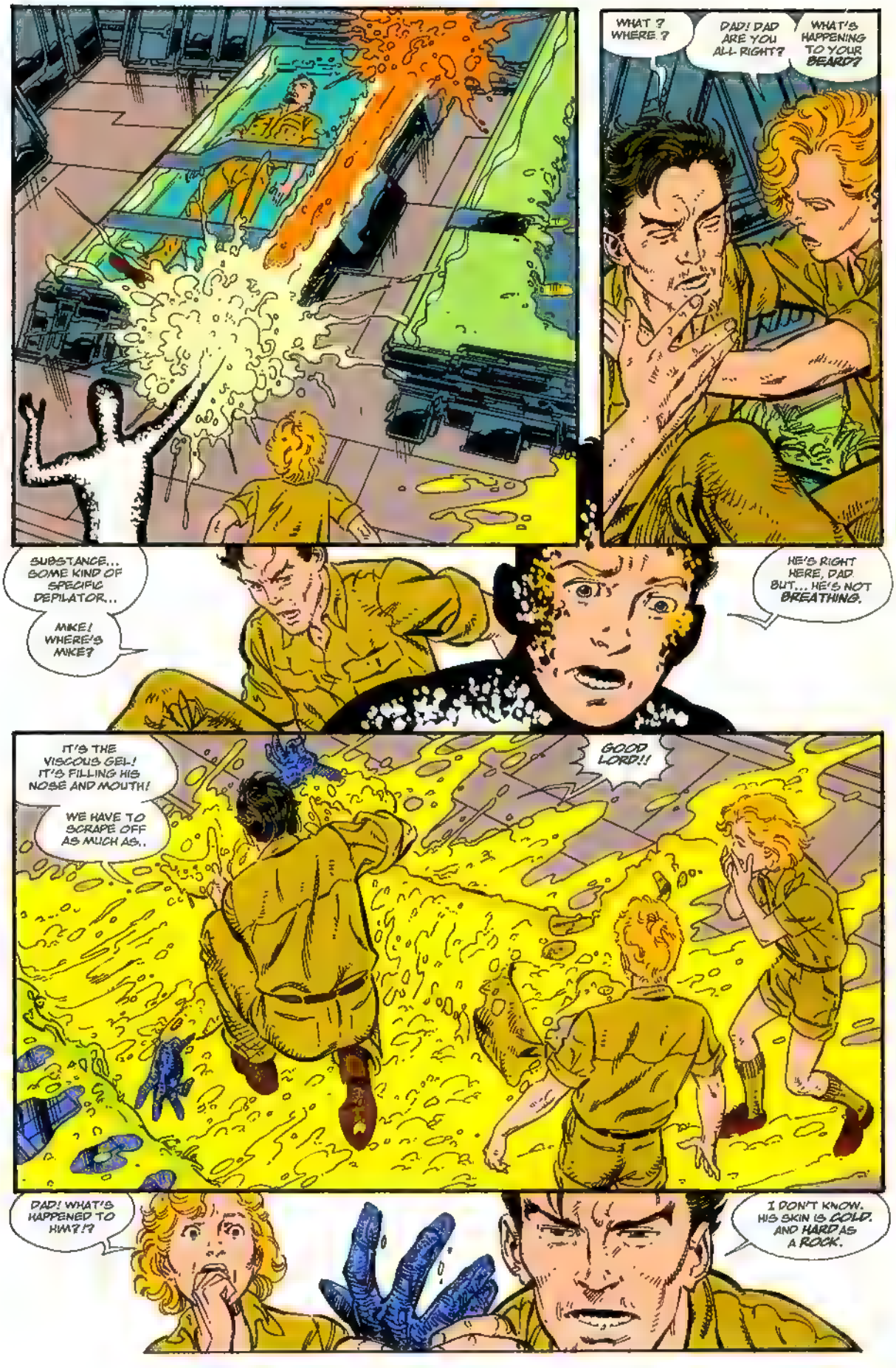

DAD LOOKS OKAY, BUT MIKE'S STILL INSIDE THAT GUNK STUFF!
CAL! BLAST OPEN THEIR TUBES! LIKE YOU DID MINE!
WAIT! LOOK AT THIS!

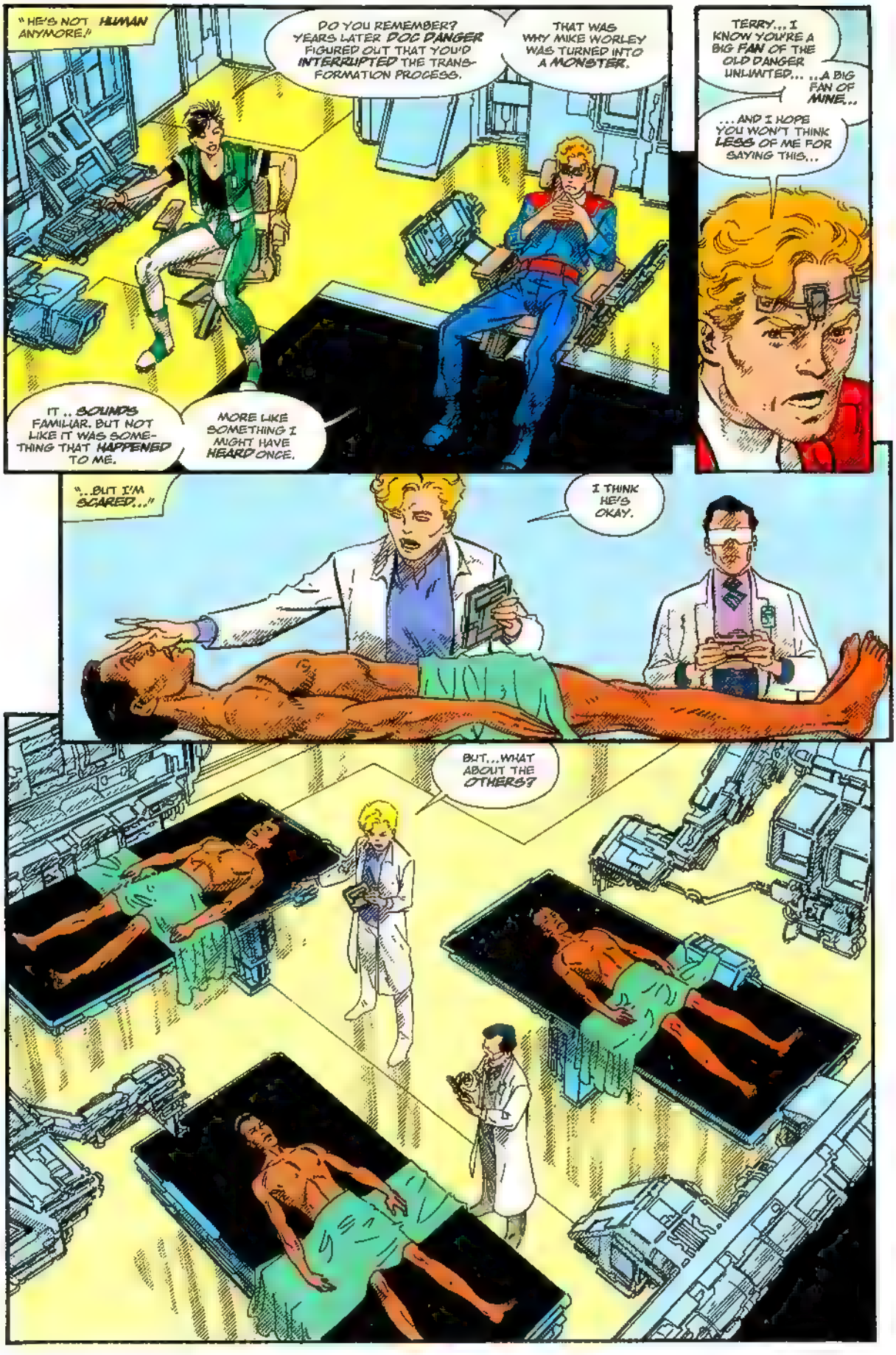

WHAT ARE THESE LIGHTS?


THEY'RE SWITCHING OFF, ONE BY ONE.


ALMOST LIKE... SOME KIND OF COUNTDOWN.

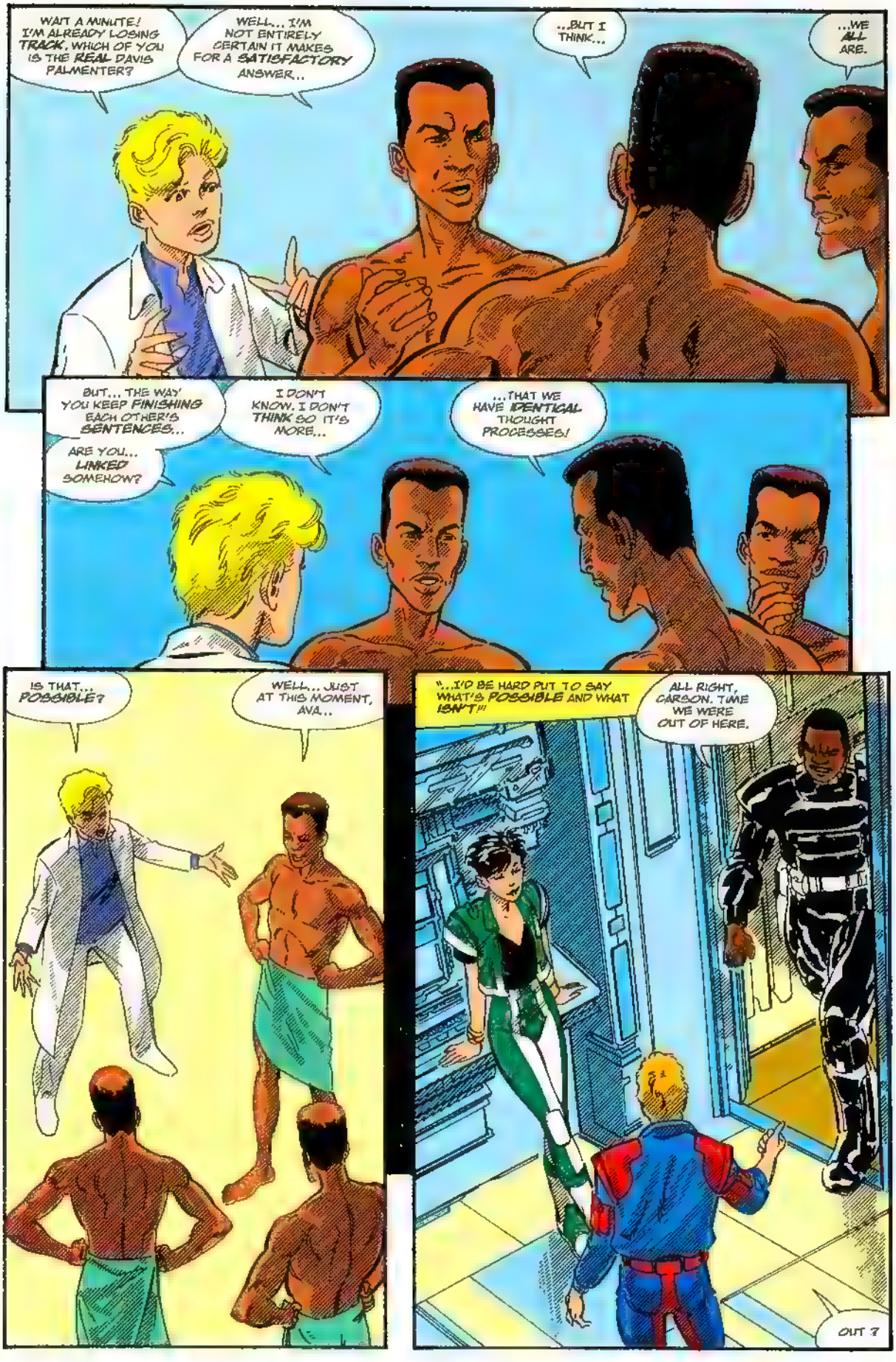
CAL! CAL! DON'T WASTE TIME TALKING!
GET HIM OUT OF THERE!
OKAY! OKAY! I THINK I CAN REMEMBER HOW TO...
YEAH!!
AND DAD! GET DAD OUT TOO!

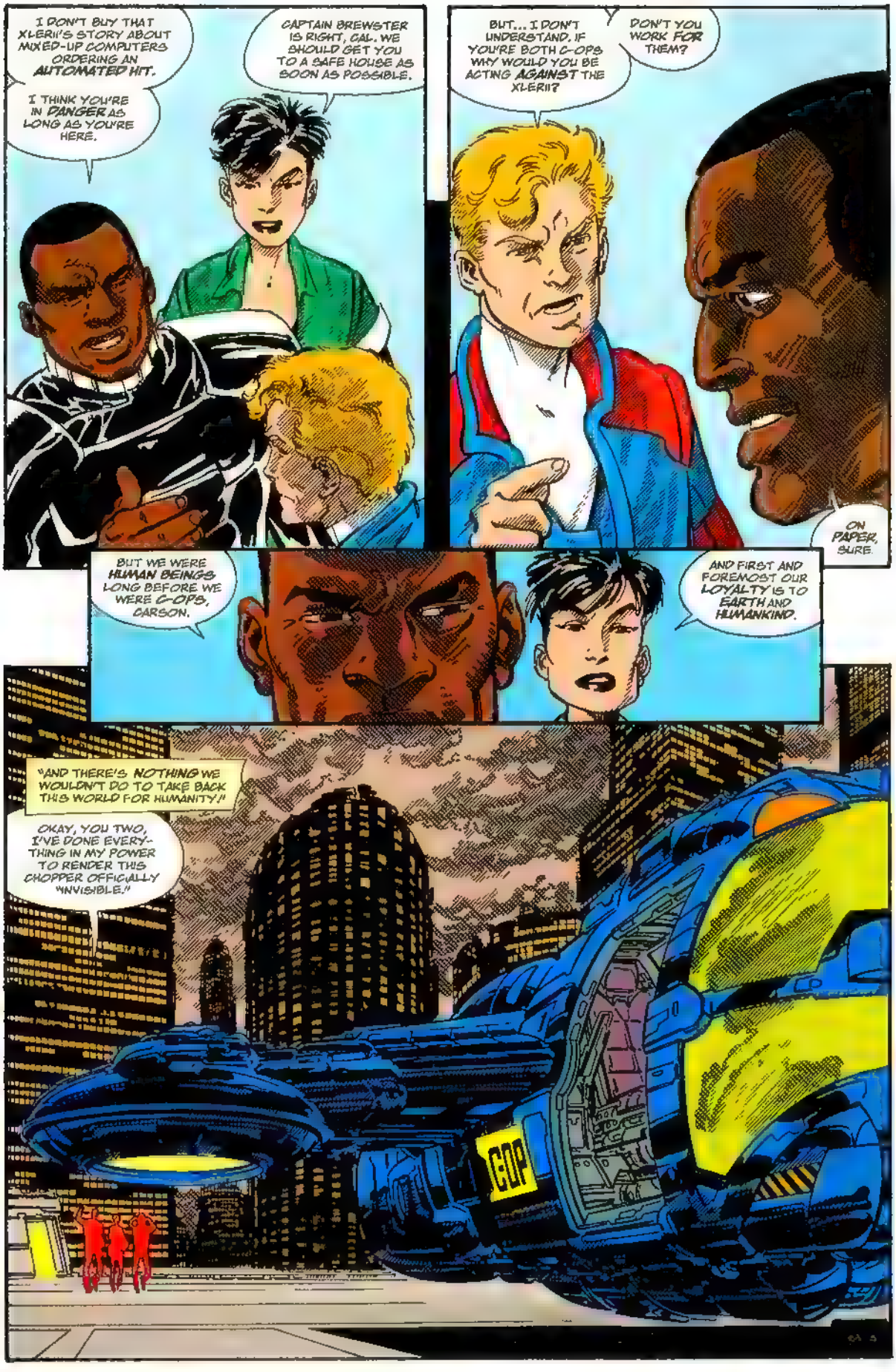

WHAT ? WHERE ?
DAD! DAD ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOUR BEARD?
SUBSTANCE... SOME KIND OF SPECIFIC DEPILATOR..
MIKE! WHERE'S MIKE?
HE'S RIGHT HERE, DAD BUT... HE'S NOT BREATHING.
IT'S THE VISCOUS GEL! IT'S FILLING HIS NOSE AND MOUTH!
WE HAVE TO SCRAPE OFF AS MUCH AS..
GOOD LORD!!
DAD! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM?!?
I DON'T KNOW. HIS SKIN IS COLD. AND HARD AS A ROCK.

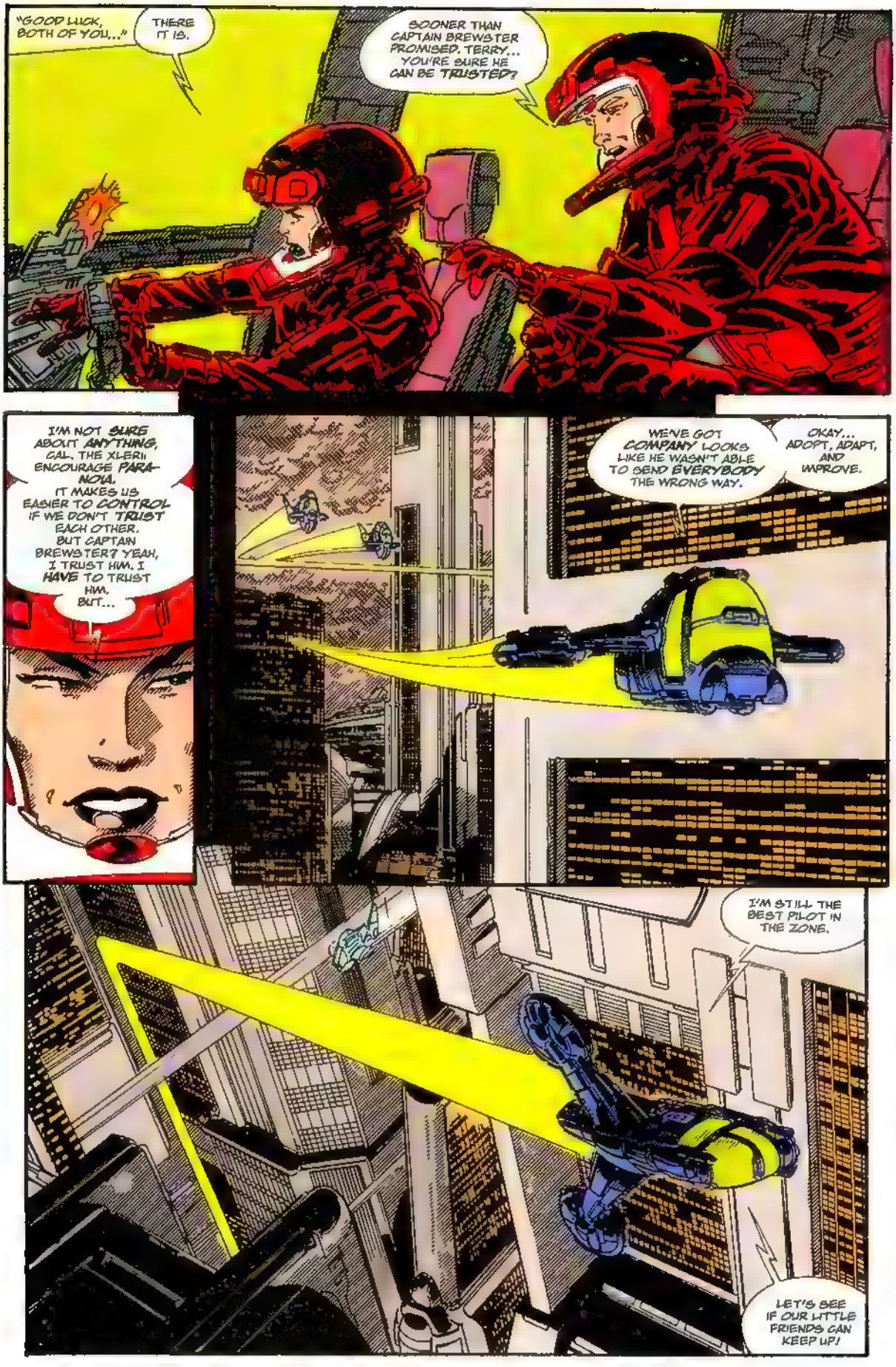

"HE'S NOT HUMAN ANYMORE."
DO YOU REMEMBER? YEARS LATER DOC DANGER FIGURED OUT THAT YOU'D INTERRUPTED THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS.
THAT WAS WHY MIKE WORLEY WAS TURNED INTO A MONSTER.
IT .. SOUNDS FAMILIAR. BUT NOT LIKE IT WAS SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED TO ME.
MORE LIKE SOMETHING I MIGHT HAVE HEARD ONCE.
TERRY... I KNOW YOU'RE A BIG FAN OF THE OLD DANGER UNLIMITED... ...A BIG FAN OF MINE...
...AND I HOPE YOU WON'T THINK LESS OF ME FOR SAYING THIS...
"...BUT I'M SCARED..."
I THINK HE'S OKAY.
BUT...WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS?

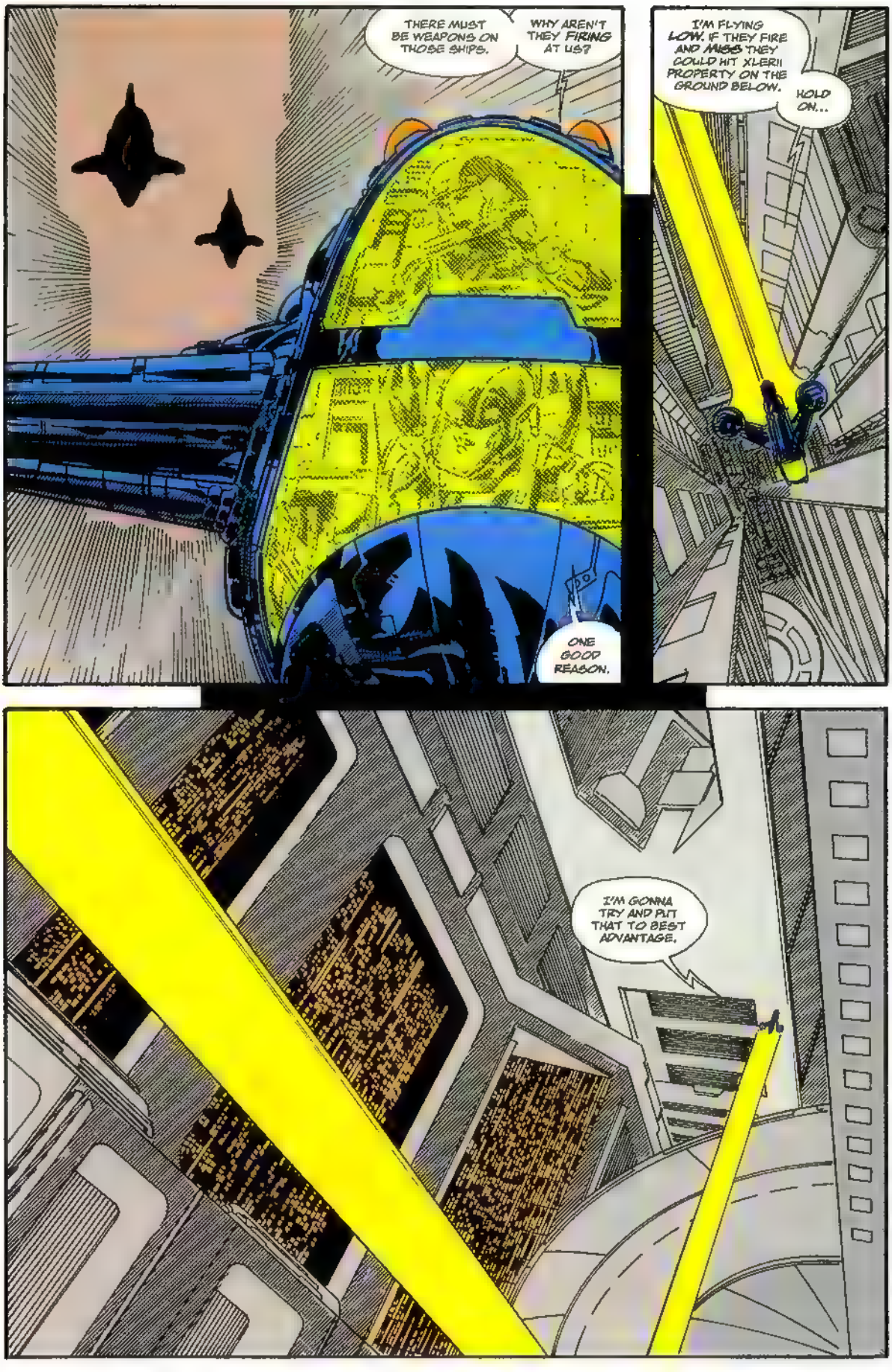
ALL THEIR LIFE SIGNS ARE COMPLETELY STABLE.
IT'S INCREDIBLE!
IF I HADN'T SEEN IT WITH MY OWN EYES, I NEVER WOULD HAVE BELIEVED IT!
IT WAS JUST LIKE A CELL DIVIDING UNDER A MICROSCOPE.
ONLY IT WASN'T A CELL. IT WAS— IT IS A MAN. AND THERE HAVE TO BE SOME KIND OF REPERCUSSIONS.
MAYBE NOT.
DAVIS! ARE YOU... I MEAN, HOW...
I'M OKAY, I THINK. I FEEL A LITTLE... WEAK. BUT NOTHING ELSE.
I THINK WE'D BETTER REPORT THIS...
I'M GONNA ALERT THE C-OPS...
HUH??
NO.

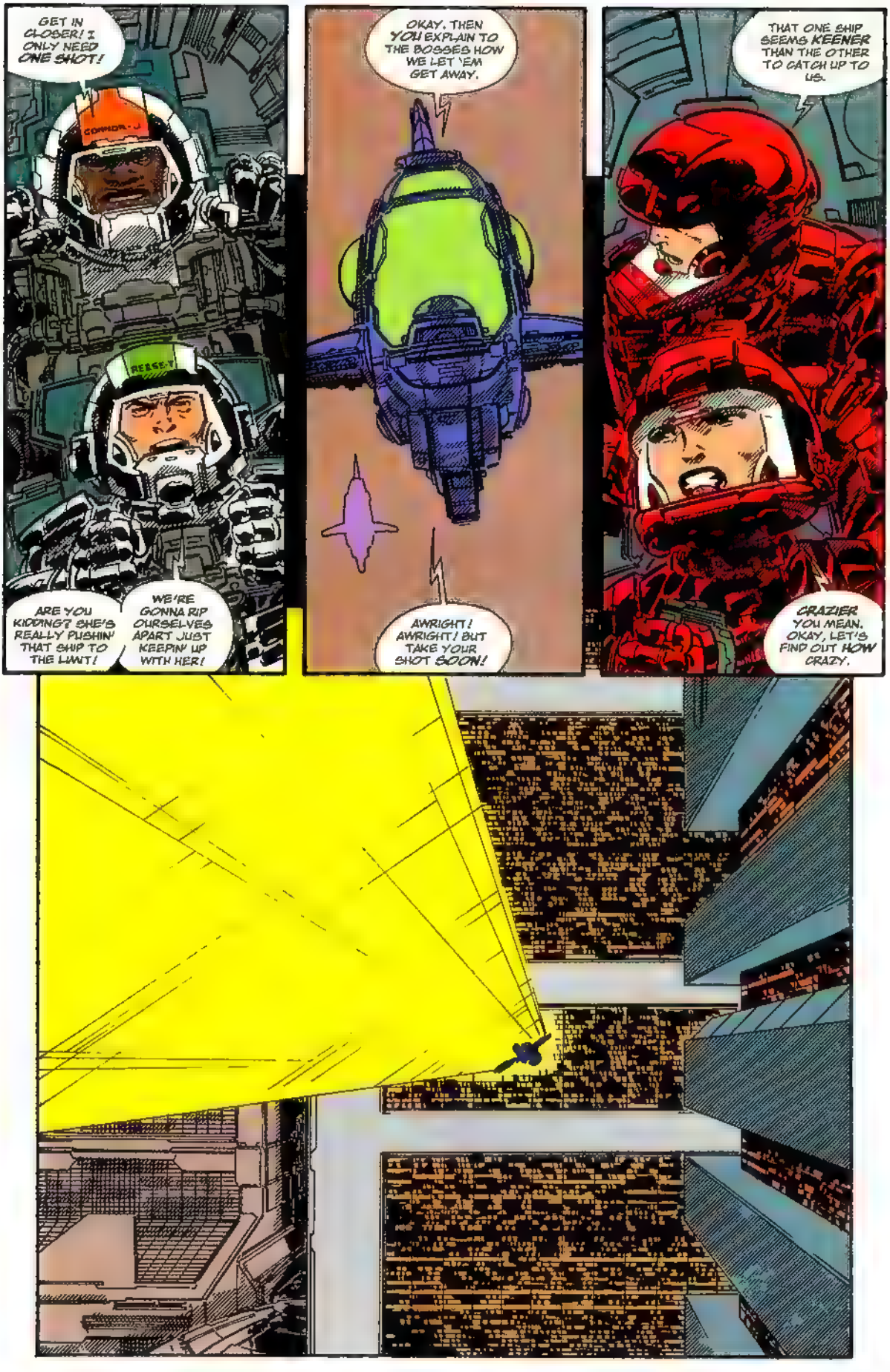
I THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER IF WE POSTPONED THAT FOR JUST A LITTLE WHILE LONGER.
WHAT ? HOW ? UNGH!
PROFESSOR... ARE YOU DOING THAT?
NO... MY... OTHER SELF SEEMS TO BE OPERATING...
...QUITE INDEPENDENTLY. BUT IF ANYONE CONSTITUTES MY "OTHER SELF..."
...IT WOULD BE THE TWO OF YOU!.
D-DAVIS.?
I'VE HEARD OF SPLIT PERSONALITIES...
...BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS!


WAIT A MINUTE! I'M ALREADY LOSING TRACK. WHICH OF YOU IS THE REAL DAVID PALMENTER?
WELL... I'M NOT ENTIRELY CERTAIN IT MAKES FOR A SATISFACTORY ANSWER...
...BUT I THINK...
...WE ALL ARE.
BUT... THE WAY YOU KEEP FINISHING EACH OTHER'S SENTENCES...
ARE YOU... LINKED SOMEHOW?
I DON'T KNOW. I DON'T THINK SO IT'S MORE...
...THAT WE HAVE IDENTICAL THOUGHT PROCESSES!
IS THAT... POSSIBLE?
WELL... JUST AT THIS MOMENT, AVA...
"...I'D BE HARD PUT TO SAY WHAT'S POSSIBLE AND WHAT ISN'T!"
ALL RIGHT, CARSON. TIME WE WERE OUT OF HERE.
OUT ?

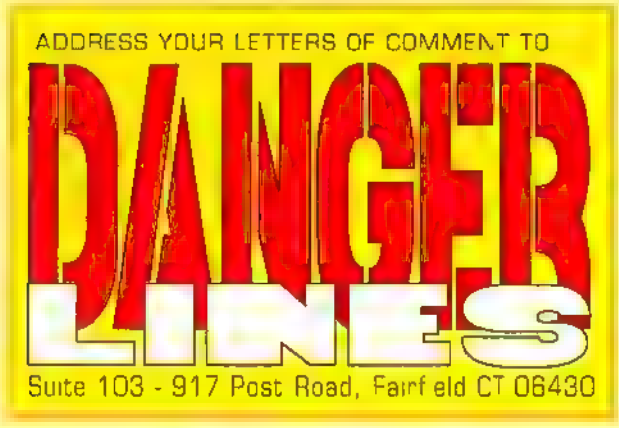

I DON'T BUY THAT XLERII'S STORY ABOUT MIXED-UP COMPUTERS ORDERING AN AUTOMATED HIT.
I THINK YOU'RE IN DANGER AS LONG AS YOU'RE HERE.
CAPTAIN BREWSTER IS RIGHT, CAL. WE SHOULD GET YOU TO A SAFE HOUSE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
BUT... I DON'T UNDERSTAND. IF YOU'RE BOTH C-OPS WHY WOULD YOU BE ACTING AGAINST THE XLERII?
DON'T YOU WORK FOR THEM?
ON PAPER, SURE.
BUT WE WERE HUMAN BEINGS LONG BEFORE WE WERE C-OPS, CARSON.
AND FIRST AND FOREMOST OUR LOYALTY IS TO EARTH AND HUMANKIND.
"AND THERE'S NOTHING WE WOULDN'T DO TO TAKE BACK THIS WORLD FOR HUMANITY!"
OKAY, YOU TWO, I'VE DONE EVERY-THING IN MY POWER TO RENDER THIS CHOPPER OFFICIALLY "INVISIBLE."
COP


"GOOD LUCK, BOTH OF YOU..."
THERE IT IS.
SOONER THAN CAPTAIN BREWSTER PROMISED, TERRY... YOU'RE SURE HE CAN BE TRUSTED?
I'M NOT SURE ABOUT ANYTHING, GAL. THE XLERii ENCOURAGE PARANOIA. IT MAKES US EASIER TO CONTROL IF WE DON'T TRUST EACH OTHER. BUT CAPTAIN BREWSTER? YEAH, I TRUST HIM. I HAVE TO TRUST HIM. BUT...
WE'VE GOT COMPANY. LOOKS LIKE HE WASN'T ABLE TO SEND EVERYBODY THE WRONG WAY.
OKAY... ADOPT, ADAPT, AND IMPROVE.
I'M STILL THE BEST PILOT IN THE ZONE.
LET'S SEE IF OUR LITTLE FRIENDS CAN KEEP UP!


THERE MUST BE WEAPONS ON THOSE SHIPS.
WHY AREN'T THEY FIRING AT US?
ONE GOOD REASON.
I'M FLYING LOW. IF THEY FIRE AND MISS THEY COULD HIT XLERII PROPERTY ON THE GROUND BELOW.
HOLD ON...
I'M GONNA TRY AND PUT THAT TO BEST ADVANTAGE.


GET IN CLOSER! I ONLY NEED ONE SHOT!
CONNOR-J
REESE-T
ARE YOU KIDDING? SHE'S REALLY PUSHIN' THAT SHIP TO THE LIMIT!
WE'RE GONNA RIP OURSELVES APART JUST KEEPIN' UP WITH HER!
OKAY. THEN YOU EXPLAIN TO THE BOSSES HOW WE LET 'EM GET AWAY.
AWRIGHT! AWRIGHT! BUT TAKE YOUR SHOT SOON!
THAT ONE SHIP SEEMS KEENER THAN THE OTHER TO CATCH UP TO US.
CRAZIER YOU MEAN. OKAY, LET'S FIND OUT HOW CRAZY.

THEY'RE STILL ON OUR TAIL, ABOVE AND TO THE RIGHT, TERRY...
...I HOPE YOU'RE PLANNING ON TURNING SOON...
OMIGOD!! TURN! TURN!!
CONNOR
REE
GENESIS



Welcome to the first official *Danger Unlimited* letter column! At my behest, the good folks at Dark Horse sent out a few preview copies of our first issue, and herewith we now present some of your comments. As in *John Byrne's Next Men,* I'll drop my responses into the body of your letters in boldface type, like this. So, off we go...

Joey Marchese
Union, NJ
Although interviews with John revealed more about the characters than I would have liked, the one thing about ***Danger*** #1 which jumped out was that this is a story still unfolding. John left me with the same kind of wonder and astonishment that he mentioned was a big part of his comic-reading childhood. There was no origin and not even a grouping of all the prospective team members, and John simply told us enough to whet our appetite for the next issue. Of course the "cliffhanging" should be one of the things Mr. Byrne prides himself on, even over in ***Next Men***.

Danger Unlimited isn't really like anything John's done before, and I fail to see much of a comparison to whatever he's done at Marvel or DC. Yeah, there's the basic foundation for a Fantastic Four-like team, as well as a future, albeit one not as dreary or frightening as the one presented in ***JBNM***.

Hmm... You don't think having the whole world taken over by aliens is frightening, Joey? Of course, that might not have been all that obvious, reading the first issue alone, so I won't assume you're totally strange until I see your response to future issues!

Yet the characters are already three-dimensional. John's got the elements for a varied and fun team, so let's not waste them. This should be an interesting universe to watch, seeing it unfold in the past, present, and future as John tinkers with an entirely new mythos rather than expanding on an already-existing one. And, of course, the fanboy in me is curious to see if anything in ***Danger Unlimited*** will contradict the wonderfully planned continuity of ***JBNM***.

Not a chance, since *Danger* and *JBNM* take place in entirely different realities. The 1985 in which the original DU team vanished and the 2059 in which Cal Carson awakes do not bracket the years in which *Next Men* unfolds. I kind of like the idea of having as many separate universes as I feel like—though, as you may know, *DU* shares its space with Mike Mignola's *Hellboy* and Arthur Adams' *Monkeyman & O'Brien.*

Then there's the back-up feature, ***The Torch of Liberty***. Not only has Kieron Dwyer developed a unique style of his own, John's script was excellent and even made me look to the lead story when the name Golgotha was mentioned. This "interactive" reading between the two stories is a great way of dropping subtle hints about what the future of ***Danger Unlimited*** will be like. "Great Escape" was a super story.

Thanks for your time and the preview. No doubt about it, ***Danger Unlimited*** is going to be one of John's successes, and I can only hope that Mr. Byrne has as much fun creating it as I did reading it!

Maybe even *more*, Joey!

Jeff Rhodes
Baden, PA
Thank you for the preview copy of John Byrne's ***Danger Unlimited***. I'll be looking for this title in February.

The artwork is fantastic. I am curious to see if the addition of color will add to or take away from the impact these pages had to my eyes.

The story is my kind of story...it was easy to follow and it moved fast. The characters are interesting and somewhat surprising (see pages 17 and 19).

I'm not a big fan of back-up stories in comics, and ***The Torch of Liberty***, I have to admit, was very deceiving. When I saw the first page, so dark, the artwork sketchier, and the time period of 1944 wartime, it all worked as a turnoff for me. But I stuck with the story and was pleasantly engrossed by the time I turned to the last page. I think this story should be expanded and given its own comic.

The plan at present is to let the Torch run for a couple of "arcs" in *DU*, with the hope that he'll prove popular enough to spin off into his own title in the near future. (Cast your votes now!) More immediately, Kieron and I have discussed a *Torch of Liberty Christmas Special* to come out—surprise, surprise—around Christmas of 1994. And I hope you didn't miss Mrs. Gibney's little boy Paul's walk-on in *Hellboy* #1. (Yes, I did name the Torch after my friend Paul Gibney. It seemed only fair, since he suggested the name "Torch of Liberty.")

Joe Kucharski III
Haddon Hts, NJ
Using LaFayette, due to her blushing enthusiasm upon her entrance to DU Central—she was cherishing this experience as something more than a job—this sanctum was a place of reverent awe. This state of awe transferred its glow to me—this is the beginning of yet another Byrne classic and I'm in on the ground floor.

The ground floor, however, was all that was established. Numerous splash pages screaming for Matt's finishing hues led us in; three faceless, sexless C-Ops gave us an impromptu tour describing names we never heard yet bearing importance and showing devices as new to us as this world. Suddenly Thermal leaps to life, pushing us back seventy-five years and teasing us with a little information ensuring a prompt return. Doubtless, answers will ensue as the issue numbers increase, so I'll withhold any fanboy questions.

I can predict, if anything, that this entire run will be christened with discoveries: Calvin's discovery of 2060 AD; discovering LaFayette's unexpected abilities and her induction as the first of a new breed that's destined to become Danger Unlimited Generation Two; discoveries of untold (yet familiar) "fantastic" origins; and I'm allowed the grand role of witness to discover it all.

Whereas ***Danger Unlimited*** boasted flashy, hi-tech designs, sanitary white environs and modest attitudes, ***The Torch of Liberty*** was a stark contrast. Thick lines told the grungy tale of war and suffering and heroic bravado in a time that was supposedly more gentle than today's state of shattered innocence. Kieron Dwyer, who has long been absent from the pages of monthly ritual, captured the long-reigning style of early *Captain America* stories, a style recently renewed, albeit in a sarcastic manner, in DC's *General Glory* and Image's *1963* series, in which the enemy is stereotypically stupid and the hero *always* wins. Yet another discovery awaits in unveiling the connection between this 1944 and a far future where moral issues have no easy answers and heroism has long been forgotten.

Once more, thanks for this entertaining surprise—its arrival helped make my Christmas a little more merry. Success to all, and I look forward to the arrival of ***Danger Unlimited*** on the stands!

Link W. Herman
Goddard, KS

The pencils and inks are up to the standard of excellence you have shown throughout your works that I have read and enjoyed. The story looks very intriguing. I'm anxiously awaiting issue two so I can find out more about the "Bosses." The pacing seemed a bit slow, but I've learned from reading ***John Byrne's Next Men*** that you *always* have a purpose in what you put on paper. It may not make sense now, but several issues later it makes you go, "Ah! So that's who he is!" or something like that.

Hmm. Now, this is very interesting. Time and again I've had fans tell me they found the pacing in various books I've worked on to be "slow," and I've always assumed they meant it wasn't wall-to-wall punching and hitting with an exploding galaxy or two thrown in just to keep the interest up. But here you seem to be using "slow" to mean that everything is not revealed in the first issue. Is that right? Is my deliberate pacing—i.e. not letting you in on everything right off the top—what makes a story "slow"? Legitimate question. I'm curious to read your answers.

Now, on to ***Torch of Liberty***. This looks like it's going to be a fun read, with some long-lasting impact (at least to the ***Danger Unlimited*** storyline). Time will be needed to see how well I enjoy it. The taste provided was too brief to really get a feel for it. Kieron's pencils and inks are very good and fit the mood of the story well. I don't even miss the color, which in ***DU*** seemed to be wanting in places (in the black-and-white preview).

I was absolutely delighted when I saw what Kieron had done with the first *Torch* episode. With the directions his work had been taking in the last couple of years, I hoped he would be the one to capture what I was after in *Torch*—that war is not good, clean fun, even a "good war" like WW2—and I was not disappointed.

* * * * *

The King is dead.

Sunday, February 6, 1994. I was just sitting down to watch "Lois and Clark" when people began calling with the news. Jack Kirby died in the morning hours. It was something we'd been expecting for some time. Ravaged by cancer, the powerhouse Kirby had been all his life had shrunk as low as it was possible to go.

After I heard the news I picked up my address book and began calling those people I thought might be sufficiently "out of the loop" that they would not have heard. They were short calls. There wasn't much that could be said. The last person I called was Jim Warden, my art dealer. Toward the end of the conversation Jim said something that took me totally by surprise. "Better take care of yourself," he said. "You're the King now."

It was something which would never have occurred to me, and it sent my brain tumbling down some strange paths. Just last year I'd realized I'd matched Kirby's physical output for the point at which he'd been in the business twenty years, as I now have. *Comic Values Monthly* recently declared me to have been the first of the comic-book Superstars. Repeatedly, it seemed, I was being told no one other than Kirby had touched as many characters, had quite as much impact on the industry.

Could it be possible? Would it be overweening ego to think of myself as heir apparent to Jack Kirby?

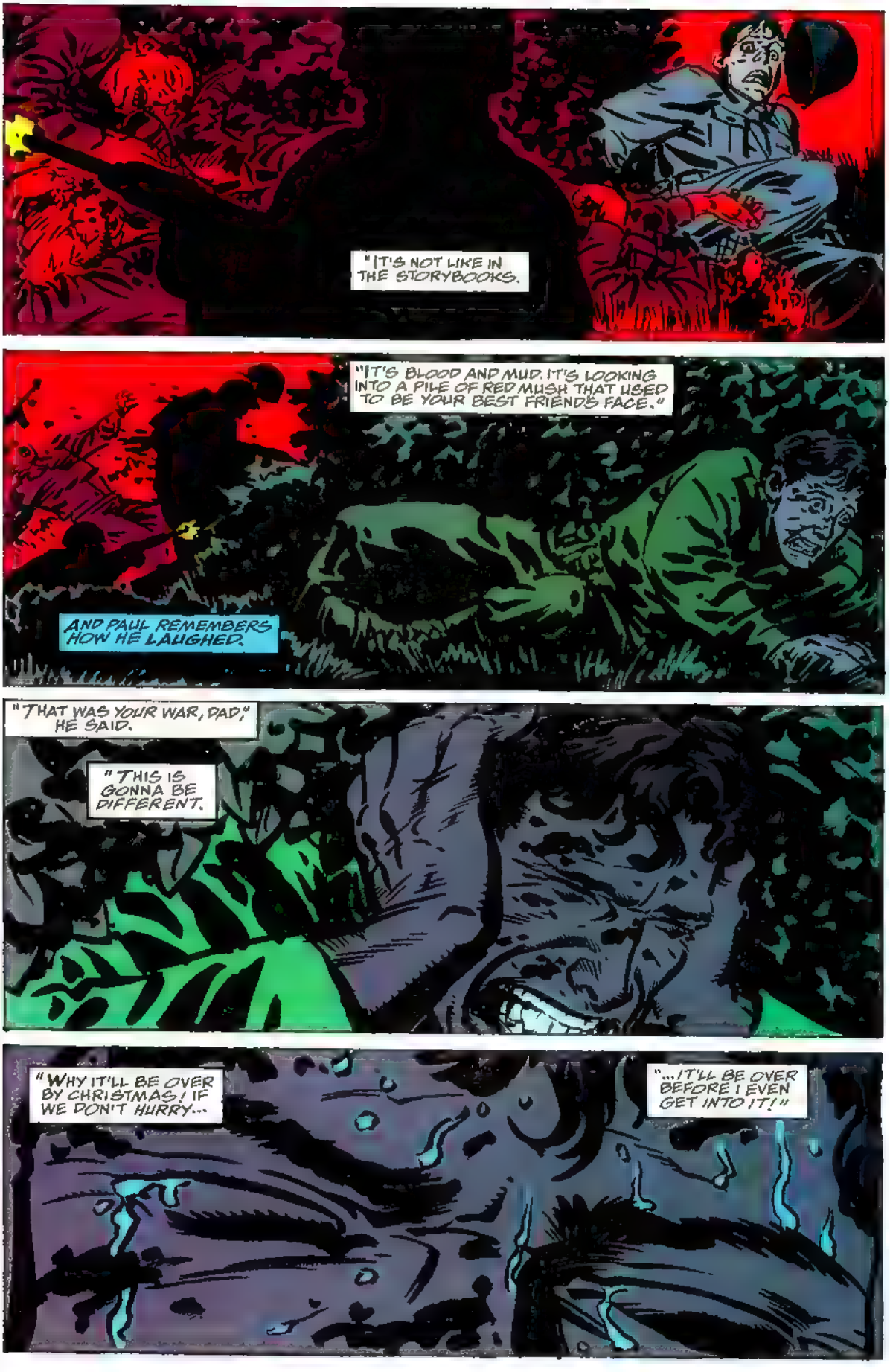
Of course it would. It would for *anyone*. Jack Kirby truly bestrode the world like a colossus. In a career spanning half a century, there was virtually no part of the industry he did not touch: penciller, inker, writer, editor, publisher. With Joe Simon and, later, Stan Lee, he created characters and concepts—the romance comic was his—that expanded the shape of the industry. Without Kirby we might never have seen Captain America, the Fly, the Challengers of the Unknown, the Fantastic Four, the Hulk, the X-Men. Most certainly we would never have seen the New Gods, Mister Miracle, and the Demon.

There have been other major talents since Jack Kirby began his career, and there will continue to be others now that he is gone. But there will never be anyone to take his place.

The King is dead. That's all there is to say.

THE NAKED AND THE DEAD
PENCILLED & INKED, COLORED & LETTERED BY: KIERON DWYER
CREATED & WRITTEN BY: JOHN BYRNE
A MOMENT AGO THE NIGHT WAS NEARLY SILENT...
TORCH of LIBERTY
A MOMENT AGO THE HOOT OF A DISTANT OWL AND THE HUSHED, ANXIOUS WHISPERS OF A HANDFUL OF AMERICAN COMMANDOS DISTURBED THE DARKNESS.
THEN A TWIG SNAPPED, SOMEWHERE IN THE UNDERBRUSH.
THEN PAUL GIBNEY FOUND HIMSELF LOOKING INTO THE FACE OF DEATH...

HE WOULD NEVER HAVE BELIEVED THE WORLD COULD CHANGE SO FAST..
IN AN INSTANT.. IN LESS THAN A HEARTBEAT..
.. HE FEELS ALL STRENGTH, ALL COURAGE, DRAIN FROM HIM LIKE SAND FROM A BROKEN BAG...
IN LESS TIME THAN IT TAKES TO TELL, HE SEES THE MEN HE'S TRAINED WITH...
..LIVED WITH...
...FOUGHT WITH...
... CHANGE FROM FRIENDS...
... BROTHERS, SONS...
...SWEET-HEARTS...
...TO EMPTY, SILENT, WASTED THINGS...
AND HE HEARS AGAIN THE WORDS HIS FATHER SPOKE AS PAUL RACED BOLDLY, BRASHLY OFF TO WAR...
"IT'S NOT LIKE YOU THINK IT'S GONNA BE...


"IT'S NOT LIKE IN THE STORYBOOKS.
"IT'S BLOOD AND MUD. IT'S LOOKING INTO A PILE OF RED MUSH THAT USED TO BE YOUR BEST FRIENDS FACE."
AND PAUL REMEMBERS HOW HE LAUGHED.
"THAT WAS YOUR WAR, DAD," HE SAID.
"THIS IS GONNA BE DIFFERENT.
"WHY IT'LL BE OVER BY CHRISTMAS! IF WE DON'T HURRY...
"...IT'LL BE OVER BEFORE I EVEN GET INTO IT!"

THE SILENCE HAS RETURNED TO THE NIGHT...
THE AIR IS COOL. ITS BREEZES CARRY DISTANT VOICES...
THEY WILL TELL US NO MORE.
ELIMINATE THEM.
BLAM!
NO!
JUST TIME ENOUGH TO CHANGE YOUR MIND, AMERICAN...
GO TO HELL, KRAUT!
...WHILE YOU STILL HAVE A MIND TO CHANGE.
SUCH HEROICS!
SUCH STUPIDITY!
BLAM
NO!
NOOOO!

NO.
THE RED MIST FADES...
THE WORLD SHIFTS. SLOWLY INTO FOCUS.
NOM DU NOM!
MAM'SELLE!
WHAT... WHAT HAPPENED!?
YOU... YOU WERE MAGNIFIQUE!
I 'AVE NEVER SEEN SUCH A FIGHTER!
THE NAZIS... 'AD NO CHANCE!
YOU'RE HURT. BAD. DON'T TALK.
YOUR EYES!
ZEY BLAZED... LIKE THE TORCH... OF LADY LIBERTY!
MAM'-SELLE ??
NO...
NONONONO NO NO NO NO NO...

NO...
SO LONG.
BARELY THREE YEARS. BUT SO LONG.
SO LONG.
PAUL GIBNEY HAS MADE A PILGRIMAGE TO THIS PLACE...
THIS EMPTY, SILENT PLACE.
WIND AND RAIN HAVE WASHED AWAY THE BLOOD, BUT HE KNOWS THE WALLS REMEMBER.
AS HE REMEMBERS.
THE CLIPPING IS YELLOWED, THE PAPER STIFF AND FRAGILE.
SALE
HE WONDERS WHY HE STILL CARRIES IT.
CERTAINLY HE HAS NO NEED TO.
EVERY WORD IS WRITTEN ON HIS HEART IN BLOOD AND FIRE.
HE LETS IT FALL.
IT FLUTTERS TO THE DIRTY FLOOR LIKE A DRY LEAF.
THE MOMENT FOR REMEMBRANCE IS PAST.
THERE IS A WAR TO WIN.
THERE IS A MISSION FOR THE MAN NOW CALLED THE TORCH OF LIBERTY.
AND PAUL GIBNEY, WHO WENT LAUGHING INTO WAR...?
LOCAL BOY MISSING IN FRANCE
PAUL GIBNEY
PAUL GIBNEY IS DEAD.
NEXT:
FOR EVERY GOOD THERE IS AN EVIL. FOR EVERY RIGHT THERE IS A WRONG. FOR THE TORCH OF LIBERTY THERE IS...
GOLGOTHA!

FINISH LINE

Well, hello again! It's been quite a while since we last met on these pages and I can't tell you what a long, strange trip it's been! You remember me, Bob Schreck, the former marketing director, now special projects director, here at Dark Horse. Well, special projects director is a real misnomer — I'm actually a management level editor and *all* of the projects at Dark Horse are special, those I edit as well as those edited by my fellow workers. In March of 1992 Mike Richardson and I decided to change my focus to a full-time editorial position. This was due to the many projects I nurtured during my years as Comico's administrative director. He wanted me to go out and bring Dark Horse some new projects while also breathing new life into some of the company's older titles that had been lying dormant. This resulted in books like *Urban Legends*, *Fat Dog Mendoza*, *The Mark*, *Enemy*, and *Rack & Pain*.

I'm extremely blessed to be working with some of the finest craftsmen in our field as my current list of titles includes Mike Allred's *Madman Comics*, Dave Steven's (fabled) *Rocketeer Adventure Magazine* #3, Kurt Busiek and Neil Vokes' *Jonny Demon*, Joe Kubert on the *Medal of Honor* series, and Jim Silke's *Rascals in Paradise*, to name drop a few! I can't tell you what a pleasure it is to be working with so many talented and dedicated artisans. Pinch me!

Speaking of talent and dedication, let's move on to why I am in such a good mood these days! If you haven't already noticed in our management credits, we have added the extremely talented (and wacky!), Lou Bank to our company roster. Lou is an old friend who comes to us after several successful years at Marvel Comics. Lou is our spanking new vice president of marketing and sales and as such will be "fearless leader" to our already top-notch marketing staff which includes Kris Young, Chuck Matthews, Cheryl Cink, Dave Weigel, Michael Cox, and John Dennett. But that's not all! Lou's newly hired right-hand man is another super-duper talent, the witty and charming Michael Martens, formerly of Capital City Distribution. As our new marketing director Michael brings 13 years of experience as a major player at a major distributor. We have also added Ms. Lynn Zartman to our marketing team. She will be focusing on product development, which she has done successfully for companies like Applause and Dakin.

But my happy feet are still dancing because we are also adding Cindy Marks, yet another respected, very gifted, good buddy in the biz! Cindy is also from Capital City (and comes with loving ball-and-chain Michael attached). She will be taking over as our new director of design and production and is more than qualified due to her Herculean feat of producing Capital City's monthly *Advance Comics* tome. The hits keep comin' folks, because we're also bringing in a new art director in the form of one Mark Cox, formerly of Tundra and Marvel UK fame. Mark arrives with the John Bolton seal of approval, so we're looking forward to great things from him.

Now, those of you who know me can attest that I can be one real cynical, jaded puppy when I want to be. However, I can't control my enthusiasm over the fact that all of these hard-working folks are joining the already excellent existing pool of talent on staff in our management, editorial, design, coloring, accounting, and operations departments here at Dark Horse Comics.

All I can say is that if you thought Dark Horse was a force to be reckoned with in the past — you ain't seen nothin' yet! Think about this fantastic staff working side by side with the finest group of writers, artists, letterers, and colorists this field has to offer and you'll know that surely, the sky is the limit.

And yes, I'm still...
Just tryin' to be,
Bob Schreck

APRIL CHECKLIST

SHIPPING APRIL 5
- ❑ ALIENS: COLONIAL MARINES #9
- ❑ APPLESEED DATABOOK #1
- ❑ CLASSIC STAR WARS #18
- ❑ JOE R. LANSDALE'S BY BIZARRE HANDS #1
- ❑ RACK & PAIN #2
- ❑ SIN CITY: A DAME TO KILL FOR #5
- ❑ X #3

SHIPPING APRIL 12
- ❑ ATLAS #2
- ❑ BUBBLEGUM CRISIS: GRAND MAL #2
- ❑ DARK HORSE PRESENTS #84
- ❑ JOHN BYRNE'S NEXT MEN: POWER #2
- ❑ MADMAN COMICS #1
- ❑ OUT OF THE VORTEX #7

SHIPPING APRIL 19
- ❑ ALIENS: MUSIC OF THE SPEARS #4
- ❑ BARB WIRE #1
- ❑ CARAVAN KIDD PART 2 #10
- ❑ COUTOO
- ❑ GRENDEL TALES: DEVIL'S HAMMER #3
- ❑ HELLBOY: SEED OF DESTRUCTION #2
- ❑ INDIANA JONES AND THE ARMS OF GOLD #3
- ❑ STAR WARS: DROIDS #1

SHIPPING APRIL 26
- ❑ CATALYST: AGENTS OF CHANGE #3
- ❑ DANGER UNLIMITED #3
- ❑ DARK HORSE COMICS #20
- ❑ DARK HORSE INSIDER #30
- ❑ DRACULA COLD-CAST FIGURE KIT
- ❑ HELLHOUNDS #3
- ❑ KING KONG BUST
- ❑ MEDAL OF HONOR SPECIAL
- ❑ THE SHADOW: IN THE COILS OF LEVIATHAN #4
- ❑ HARD LOOKS BOOK ONE (TRADE PAPERBACK)
- ❑ INTRON DEPOT (TRADE PAPERBACK)
- ❑ OUTLANDERS 3 (TRADE PAPERBACK)